

Wiltshire Council

Western Area Planning Committee

12 October 2016

Question From: Mr Francis Morland

Question

In a letter dated 12 May 2016 to The Planning Inspectorate's Planning Appeals Case Officer, the Council's Case Officer and Senior Planning Officer, said (see at <http://unidoc.wiltshire.gov.uk/UniDoc/Document/File/MTQvMDkyNjlvT1VULDczMjYxMA==>):

"The council confirms that at the present time of writing for the purposes of the above appeal [APP/Y3940/W/15/3130433] that [it] is not in a position [to] demonstrate a 5 year supply of housing [land] for the North and West Wiltshire Housing Market Area (HMA) and therefore it will not be necessary to consider housing requirement or supply issues at the Inquiry that is due to commence on 14th June 2016. Given the particular circumstances of this case and in the light of the current land supply position in this HMA, the Council has reviewed its position and for the purposes of this appeal only, will no longer be pursuing Reason for refusal 1, 2 and 5 which are as follows:".

How can these claims and assertions be reconciled with the Proof of Evidence of the Manager of the Monitoring and Evidence Team, submitted on or about the same date to The Planning Inspectorate's Planning Appeals Case Officer for the Inquiry into Planning Appeal APP/Y3940/W/15/3132915 (Land off A365 Shurnhold Melksham), (see at

<http://unidoc.wiltshire.gov.uk/UniDoc/Document/File/MTQvMTE5MTkvT1VULDcyOTI4OQ==>), and showing at Table 3 a Housing Land Supply in the North and West Wiltshire Housing Market Area of 5.15 years?

Is it not astonishing that Wiltshire Council officers are saying one thing to Westbury and an Inquiry Inspector for a site in Westbury, and something quite different to Melksham and an Inquiry Inspector for a site in that town?

Response

There is no contradiction between the case officer's letter to the Planning Inspectorate on the Bitham Park appeal confirming that the Council could not demonstrate a five year housing land supply and the Council's submission to the Shurnhold, Melksham Inquiry. For a five year land supply to be demonstrated, the Council must be able to demonstrate that it has a land supply of 5 years and a 5% buffer on top. The officer's Proof of Evidence at the Shurnhold Inquiry confirmed that 'The Council is currently unable to demonstrate a 5 year supply for the North and

West Housing Market Area'. The Council was therefore consistent in its approach to Housing Land Supply in both the Melksham and Westbury appeals. The Council continued to object to the planning application at Shurnhold because there were significant and demonstrable adverse impacts in relation to other matters, including the impact on heritage assets and on education provision.

The Shurnhold appeal decision once it has been published will be included as part of a future appeals update and will be reported to the Strategic Planning Committee.